

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



TRAINING MANUAL FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING FACILITATORS

DECEMBER, 2001

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The Leadership Initiative for
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INTRODUCTION

The basic text for this training is the strategic planning document that will be provided to community leaders. All other materials are contained in this manual, including the exercises that will be used just for the purposes of training the facilitators.

We will approach the strategic planning process in a series of logical and sequential steps. A degree of flexibility has been incorporated into this process so that it can be used in a variety of local situations.

STEP 1: BEGINNING THE PROCESS

Once a community or some of its key leaders express an interest in receiving strategic planning assistance, the Division of Community Services (DCS) will set in motion the necessary first steps to initiate the process. This will include the assignment of a facilitator or facilitator team that will work closely with the community throughout the planning process.

The facilitators will then begin contact with the key leaders to get the process underway. A meeting will be held with those stakeholders who have indicated their interest in strategic planning. The following will be discussed.

☐ What it will take to complete a successful strategic planning process

- Sequence of activities, using flow chart
- Timing
- Costs and funding
- Local participation

☐ Which leaders/stakeholders should be involved, such as:

- Financial Local businesses
- Government
- Manufacture
- Agricultural
- Property owners
- Religious
- Civic
- Health care and social services
- Youth
- Senior citizens
- Education
- Electric and/or gas utility
- Telecommunications
- Low Income

- ☐ How to enlist these leaders into the strategic planning process:
 - One-on-one meetings
 - Letters
 - Group meetings
 - Presentations to local organizations
 - Invitations to a leadership workshop
- ☐ What the role of a Steering Committee would be, who should serve in that capacity, and how will they be recruited.
- ☐ Which individual or agency would serve as the local coordinator of the process and liaison with the facilitators.

The facilitator will return and meet with these same stakeholders and the Steering Committee and will then take them through a series of questions to help solidify their thinking about the need for strategic planning. The facilitator could also assist them in their recruiting of other stakeholders into the process.

Why plan? (Questions to local leadership)

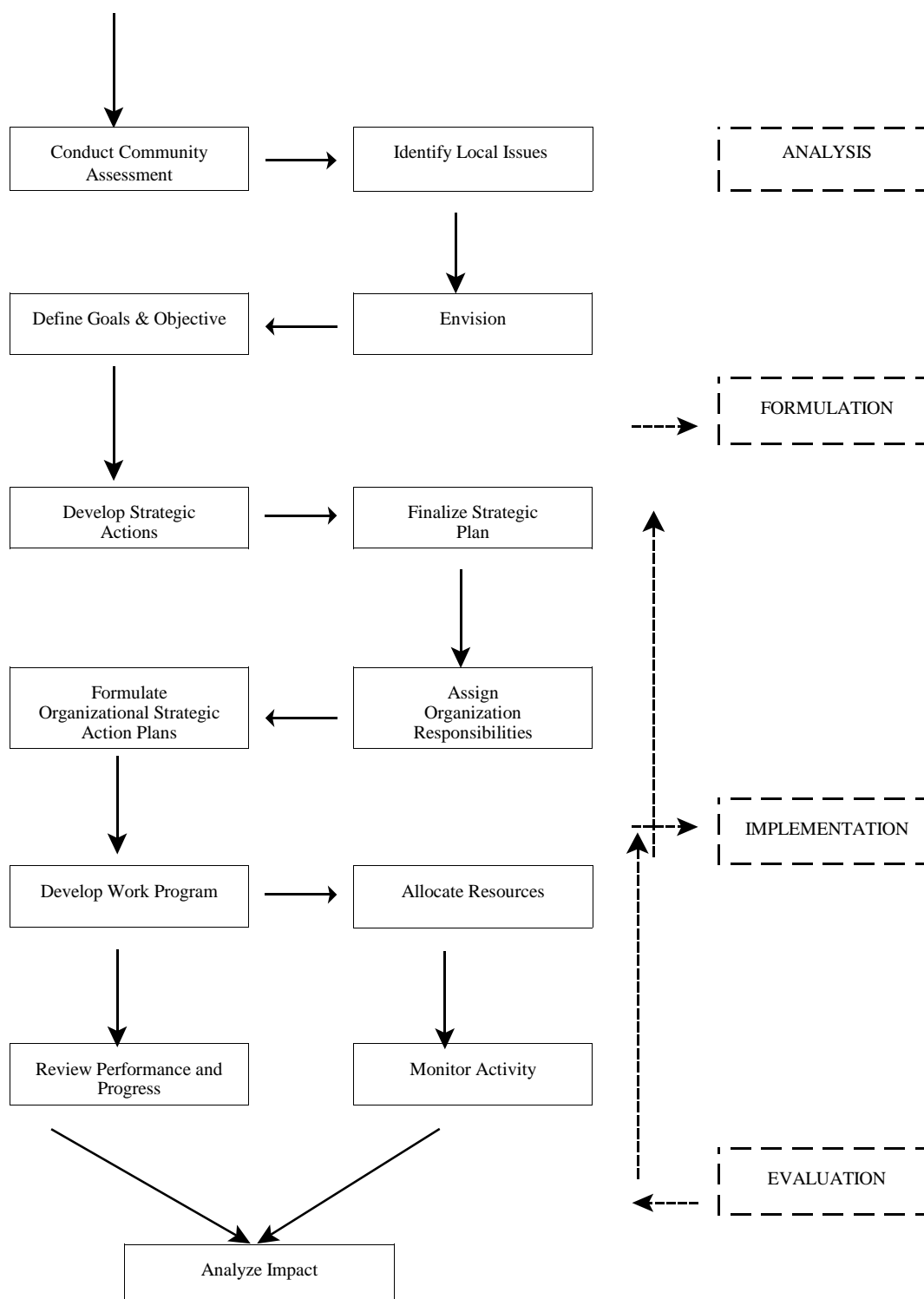
Have each individual leader take a moment to answer in writing the following questions, using the form provided. Then have them share their answers with each other and discuss.

1. What do you like or appreciate about your community?
2. What can you do to ensure that these attributes will be here ten years from now?
3. What are the most important problems that your community is facing?
4. Why do these problems continue to exist?
5. What can be done to resolve these problems?

6. What major social and economic trends are occurring in the U.S., and how will they affect our community?
7. How can the leadership of this community work together more productively to make this a better community?
8. How can we use our community's limited resources more effectively to achieve the results we want?
9. Will the leadership of the community support a process to address these issues?

INITIATION & ORGANIZATION

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



To ensure that the Steering Committee and other stakeholders understand what is involved in the strategic planning process, the Facilitator can take them through the flow chart using the following questions to briefly explain each step of the process:

Initiation and Organization – How do we get the right start to this planning process and get people involved in an effective way?

Conduct Community Assessment – Who are we as a community? What is unique about us? Why would someone want to live here? Why would a company want to locate here?

Identify Local Issues – What is important to us in the growth and development of this community? What do we think our community's strengths and weaknesses are? What do we need to focus on?

Envision – Where does this community want to go? What would we like our community to be or to look like ten years or more from now?

Define Goals – Based on our priorities, what specific directions should we be headed?

Develop Strategic Actions – What do we need to do to accomplish our goals and to solve our problems?

Finalize Strategic Action Plan – How do we craft a plan that will take us where we want to go?

Assign Organizational Responsibilities – Who will implement these strategic actions?

Formulate Organizational Strategic Action Plans – What will the community's organizations and agencies do differently to move our community forward?

Allocate Resources – What will it cost to do what needs to be done and where will the resources come from?

Monitor Activity – Are the strategic actions getting done in a timely manner and within budget?

Review Performance and Progress – How well are we doing in the implementation of the plan? Are we achieving the results we want?

Analyze Impact – Are our actions leading to desired changes in the community? Are we moving closer to our goals and vision?

Adjustment – What do we need to change or to do differently to obtain the desired results?

STEP 2: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

After the Strategic Planning Facilitator has clearly explained the strategic planning process to the satisfaction of the Steering Committee and has received their endorsement of the process, he or she will provide them with the necessary survey forms to begin the assessment of the community.

The first survey form is to be sent to the identified leadership of the community. This assessment will identify local perceptions related to the strengths and weaknesses of the community as well as highlighting key problems. This survey will be distributed by the local strategic planning Coordinator and will be returned to that individual for tabulation. This survey process should take no longer than three weeks. The surveys may need to be modified to more accurately reflect the concerns of the specific community.

LEADERSHIP SURVEY

PERCEPTION OF THE COMMUNITY'S DEVELOPMENT SITUATION

Place a checkmark (✓) in the column that best reflects your opinion. Is each item listed on this survey a strength of the community, a weakness, or is it an average or normal situation? Please answer every item, even if you are not very familiar with it, responding based on your perception of it. For example, what is your opinion of the quality of local elementary education: Strength __, Normal (what you would expect), __ Weakness (a problem) __, or No Opinion __.

QUALITY OF LIFE	Strength	Normal	Weakness	No Opinio n
1. Availability of executive-level housing	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Availability of moderate cost housing	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Availability of housing for low-income families	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Availability of rental apartments	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Cost of housing overall	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Level of crime	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Level of cultural activity and facilities	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Availability of recreational opportunities	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Presence of major sporting events	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Level of air quality	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Quality of the climate	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Attractiveness of the physical environment	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. General appearance of the community	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. Availability of adequate hospital facilities	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. Adequate local clinics and health care professionals for basic health care	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. Cost of health care relative to other areas	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. Adequate social services (day care, counseling, poverty assistance)	_____	_____	_____	_____
18. Services and programs for senior citizens	_____	_____	_____	_____
19. The rate of population growth in the community	_____	_____	_____	_____
20. Quality of relationship between the races and ethnic groups	_____	_____	_____	_____
21. Availability of elderly housing	_____	_____	_____	_____
22. Availability of accessible housing	_____	_____	_____	_____
23. Quality of housing	_____	_____	_____	_____

LOCAL EDUCATION SITUATION	Strength	Normal	Weakness	No Opinio n
1. Quality of local elementary education	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Quality of local secondary education	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Quality and availability of post-secondary education in the community	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Involvement in the community by the higher education institutions	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Involvement of local residents and parents in the school districts	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Availability of vocational programs at the secondary level (job skills, computer classes, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SITUATION				
1. Adequacy of local police protection and public safety	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Adequacy of local fire protection	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Adequacy of trash pickup and waste disposal	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Adequacy of local planning and zoning	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. State and local permitting and regulation process for business	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Annexation policy of the town/city	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Adequacy of local building codes	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Level of local property taxes	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Level of local sales taxes	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Adequacy of local tax base to cover cost of local government	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Cooperation of local government with business	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Cooperation of local government entities with each other	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Long-range planning for municipal improvements and capital budgeting	_____	_____	_____	_____
LOCAL LEADERSHIP SITUATION				
1. Adequate level of professional staff in government offices and development organizations	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Involvement of both public and private sectors in development programs of community	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Level of leadership support of economic development programs	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Level of communication and cooperation between various organizations involved in the development programs of the community	_____	_____	_____	_____

LOCAL LEADERSHIP SITUATION (CONT.)	Strength	Normal	Weakness	No Opinio n
5. Level of awareness of community regarding the local development programs	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Level of leadership commitment to advancing the growth and development of the community	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Level of funding for local development programs	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Level of cooperation with other development organizations serving this area of the State	_____	_____	_____	_____
LABOR SITUATION				
1. Availability of unskilled and semi-skilled workers	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Availability of skilled industrial workers	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Availability of clerical (retail and office) workers	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Availability of technicians and professionals	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Availability of managerial personnel	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Availability of quality jobs for the workforce residing in the community	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Level of wages and salaries paid locally	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Quality of labor-management relations	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Availability of post-secondary vocational training	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Availability of on-the-job training assistance	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Availability of adult/continuing education at a post-secondary level	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Availability of upgrade training for existing employees	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Availability of apprenticeship programs	_____	_____	_____	_____
TRANSPORTATION SITUATION				
1. Adequate local major highways	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Movement of traffic in the community	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Condition and maintenance of local streets and roads	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Level of traffic-carrying capacity of local streets	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Availability of public parking in the local commercial areas	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Availability of public transportation	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Availability of intermodal (truck to train) shipping	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Adequacy of commercial air passenger service	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Adequacy of the Airport for air freight shipping needs	_____	_____	_____	_____

UTILITY SITUATION	Strength	Normal	Weakness	No Opinio n
1. Local telephone company's quality of service	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Connection of local telephone company to national long distance network	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Cost of electricity	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Availability of high quality electric service	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Availability of natural gas	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Cost of natural gas	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Availability of potable (drinking quality) water	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Availability of adequate wastewater treatment capacity	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Availability of adequate water and sewer lines to industrial/commercial sites	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Cost of water and sewer services	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Availability of cable TV	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Internet access	_____	_____	_____	_____
REAL ESTATE SITUATION				
1. Availability of fully served and attractive industrial sites	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Availability of fully served and attractive office sites	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Availability of attractive and well located commercial/retail sites	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Cost of sites to new users	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Availability of suitable industrial building space	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Availability of suitable office space	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Availability of suitable commercial/retail space	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Availability of subdivided sites for new homes	_____	_____	_____	_____
CAPITAL SITUATION				
1. Availability of low interest or tax-exempt financing for new industrial facilities	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Availability of low interest loans for small business	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Availability of venture capital from local sources for business startups	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Availability of home mortgage financing	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Investment in the community by local financial institutions	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Availability of equity	_____	_____	_____	_____

MARKET SITUATION	Strength	Normal	Weakness	No Opinio n
1. Location of the community for serving the national market	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Location of the community for serving foreign markets	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Proximity to other major markets in the State	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Appearance of the downtown for attracting business activity	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Appearance of the highway-oriented retail/ commercial areas for attracting business activity	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Availability of a range of retail stores and goods in the community	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Availability of a range of quality restaurants in the community	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Availability of a range of personal services (legal, professional, dry cleaning, repairs, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Availability of business services and professional services that support business and industry	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Availability of adequate hotels and motels	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Availability of adequate conference and meeting facilities	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Adequacy of local newspaper for promotion of local business activity	_____	_____	_____	_____
13. Adequacy of local industrial marketing programs	_____	_____	_____	_____
14. Adequacy of local programs to attract new retail and commercial business to the community	_____	_____	_____	_____
15. Adequacy of the marketing program to attract tourists	_____	_____	_____	_____
16. Impact of the tourism industry on the community	_____	_____	_____	_____
17. The range of attractions for expanded tourism	_____	_____	_____	_____
18. Availability of funding to support tourism development	_____	_____	_____	_____

What do you consider to be the five most important problems that your community is facing now and into the future?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Is your residence? (Please complete one only)

TOWN/CITY – name _____

RURAL NON-FARM – county name _____

RURAL FARM – county name _____

The Facilitator will also provide the Steering Committee with a citizen survey. This can be

mailed to each household or can be published in the local newspaper. It can also be distributed to the local high schools to determine the opinion of the youth of the community. This survey should also be returned to the Coordinator for tabulation.

(Cover Letter for Citizen Survey)

Dear:

People often take an active voice in government only every two or four years, when they cast a vote for a candidate or an issue. We are at an important time in our community's future, however, and we need to hear from you now. We want to hear your opinion about the needs and problems of the community. What do you thin should be done to improve our quality of life and job opportunities?

You have probably heard about the strategic planning process that the community is going through at this time. Local officials and a Steering Committee of key leaders are working hard to involve all of our residents in determining who we want to be as a community, what is really important to us, and how we are going to improve our situation. We know that it is critical that we all work together to find solutions to our common problems so that we can have a brighter future as a community.

That is why we are asking you to take a few minutes to share your opinion with us by complet-ing this survey and mailing it back to us. Your response is just as important as any vote you have ever cast. The more we know about what is on your mind, the better we can plan for the future. Isn't this what good government is all about.

ON BEHALF OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE STRATEGIC PLANNING
STEERING COMMITTEE:

(Signatures)

COMMUNITY SURVEY

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE COMMUNITY?

1. Listed below are five factors that many people think are important in choosing a place to live. How do they rank in importance to you? Place a “5” by the most important, a “4” by the second most important, a “3” by the third most important, a “2” by the fourth most important, and a “1” by the least important.

- () Employment opportunities
- () Desire to be near family
- () Near good schools and other community services
- () Climate and recreation activities
- () Housing availability

2. Please circle how satisfied you are with the following in your community:

Issue	Very Pleased	Satisfied	Not Sure	Not Satisfied	Very Unhappy
a. Elementary and secondary education	5	4	3	2	1
b. Community college	5	4	3	2	1
c. Availability of adult continuing education	5	4	3	2	1
d. Job skills training	5	4	3	2	1
e. Programs for senior citizens	5	4	3	2	1
f. Health care	5	4	3	2	1
g. Child care services	5	4	3	2	1
h. Race relations	5	4	3	2	1
i. Recreation programs	5	4	3	2	1
j. Recreation facilities	5	4	3	2	1
k. Cultural activities (art, music, festivals)	5	4	3	2	1
l. Housing availability and cost	5	4	3	2	1
m. City planning	5	4	3	2	1
n. Local streets and county roads	5	4	3	2	1
o. Major highways serving the community	5	4	3	2	1
p. Public transportation	5	4	3	2	1
q. Traffic movement	5	4	3	2	1
r. Commercial air service	5	4	3	2	1
s. Water and sewer service	5	4	3	2	1
t. Water quality	5	4	3	2	1
u. Storm drainage	5	4	3	2	1
v. Environmental protection	5	4	3	2	1
w. Law enforcement	5	4	3	2	1
x. Telephone service	5	4	3	2	1
y. Level of local taxes	5	4	3	2	1
z. Availability of quality jobs	5	4	3	2	1
aa. Availability of local business financing/loans	5	4	3	2	1
bb. Retail shopping	5	4	3	2	1
cc. Downtown	5	4	3	2	1
dd. Image of the community	5	4	3	2	1
ee. Public access to the recreation areas	5	4	3	2	1
ff. Cleanliness of the community	5	4	3	2	1

3. What would you say is the biggest problem facing our community today that you would

like local government to do something about? Place an “X” in front of the answer of your choice (*only one choice permitted*).

- ☐ The quality of local education
- ☐ The availability of quality jobs
- ☐ The availability of job training or retraining
- ☐ The loss of young people moving out of the community
- ☐ Programs for senior citizens
- ☐ Health care quality and availability
- ☐ Availability of a range of recreational and cultural activity
- ☐ Availability of public transportation
- ☐ Local traffic congestion
- ☐ The quality of drinking water
- ☐ The attractiveness and cleanliness of the community
- ☐ The level of crime and drug activity
- ☐ Race relationships
- ☐ The availability of quality housing
- ☐ The cost of housing
- ☐ The level of local taxes
- ☐ The lack of developable vacant land in the city
- ☐ Lack of enforcement of zoning and building code regulations
- ☐ Inadequate shopping opportunities in the community
- ☐ The condition of the downtown
- ☐ Other (describe)_____

4. How old are you?

- ☐ 15 years or younger
- ☐ 16 to 21 years
- ☐ 22 to 35 years
- ☐ 36 to 55 years
- ☐ 55 to 65 years
- ☐ over 65 years

5. What is your sex?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

1. 6. What is your level of formal education?

- ☐ 8th grade or below
- ☐ 9th grade thru 11th grade

- () High school grade
- () Some college/technical school
- () Associate degree from 2-year college
- () College graduate (4 years)
- () Post-graduate college

7. How long have you lived in the community?

- () Less than one year
- () One to five years
- () Six to ten years
- () Eleven to twenty years
- () More than twenty years
- () All my life

2. 8. What is your occupation? _____

9. Is your residence? (Please complete one only)

TOWN/CITY – name _____

RURAL NON-FARM – county name _____

RURAL FARM – county name _____

Other Comments:

Another survey will be sent to local business owners/managers to determine their perceptions of the local business climate. That should be mailed by and returned to the Coordinator for tabulation.

BUSINESS INVESTOR ASSESSMENT

From a business investment viewpoint, how would you rate the following locational attributes of this community. Place a checkmark (✓) in the column that best reflects your opinion. Is each item listed on this survey a strength of the community, a weakness, or is it an average or normal situation? Please answer every item, even if you are not very familiar with it, responding based on your perception of it. For example, what is your opinion of the quality of local elementary education: Strength ____, Normal (what you would expect), ____, Weakness (a problem) ____, or No Opinion ____.

Locational Attribute	Strength	Average	Weakness	No Opinion
1. Labor availability				
2. Labor skills and education				
3. Quality and productivity of the workforce				
4. Wage levels				
5. Labor-management relations				
6. Diversity of the local economy				
7. Geographic location in relation to major U.S. markets				
8. Highways and Interstates				
9. Local traffic flow				
10. Trucking availability				
11. Railroad service				
12. Passenger air service				
13. Electric service and cost				
14. Gas availability and cost				
15. Water and sewer availability				
16. Industrial and commercial sites				
17. Available buildings for manufacturing and call centers				
18. Real estate costs				
19. Business support services				
20. Local property taxes				
21. Local sales taxes				
22. Availability of local business financing				
23. Availability of local business incentives				
24. Quality of local primary & secondary education				
25. Quality of local community college				
26. Quality of local 4-year educational institutions				
27. Local training capacity and quality				
28. Housing availability and cost				
29. Medical services				
30. Lodging				
31. Restaurants				
32. Cultural & recreational facilities/activities				
33. Public safety (crime)				
34. Level of local retail				
35. Climate				
36. Government attitude toward business				
37. Quality of local economic development professional assistance				
38. Condition of the downtown				

What are the five most important steps the community should take to improve the local business

situation?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

LOCATION OF BUSINESS

TOWN/CITY – name _____

RURAL NON-FARM – name _____

SERVICE AREA

NAME OF COMMUNITY		COUNTY
1)	_____	_____
2)	_____	_____
3)	_____	_____
4)	_____	_____
5)	_____	_____
6)	_____	_____
7)	_____	_____
8)	_____	_____

Understanding the local community's social and economic situation is more than conducting local surveys. An attempt should also be made to look at the community from the perspective of someone thinking of moving there or a business thinking about investing there. It would not be reasonable, however, to expect the Facilitator to conduct the necessary research and analysis for such an assessment. Therefore, it is recommended that a Core Research Group be established in the community and receive assistance from ED&F, DCS, and NDSU Extension Service to provide the following:

- ☐ Basic economic data generated from available sources.
- ☐ An information profile on the community using available sources and locally generated data (e.g., water and sewer capacity). The community profile from the BUILD program can be used for this purpose.
- ☐ An assessment of the community's strengths and weaknesses based on the economic base profile, the information profile, and the results of the three surveys.
- ☐ A brief report to the community based on the findings of the overall assessment.

COMMUNITY PROFILE AND ECONOMIC BASE ANALYSIS

In order to better understand the local situation of the community, a Core Research Group should undertake a basic analysis of the local economy. The information for this analysis should be derived from readily available state and federal data sources.

Generally, an economic base analysis deals with the following elements:

- ☐ What demographic trends are occurring in our community?
 - Population size
 - Age structure
 - Households – size and number
 - Income – level and distribution
 - Education level
- ☐ What impact are the demographic trends having on the labor force?
 - Size and availability
 - Age
 - Unemployment rate and potential underemployment
 - Commuting patterns
 - Skills and education
- ☐ What impact are the demographic trends having on the Core Elements?
 - Public Infrastructure

- Housing
- Public Services
- Economic Development

☐ What are the economic trends?

- Employment by industry
- Income by industry
- Wage and salary income vs. transfer payments
- Changes in the employment base
- Occupational profile

☐ What is happening to retail activity?

☐ What trends are occurring in the local agricultural situation?

☐ What overall conclusions can be drawn?

The following is an example of such an economic base analysis.

AN ECONOMIC BASE ANALYSIS OF THE LINCOLN CITY AREA

Introduction

As the leadership of Lincoln City plans their economic future, it is important that attention be paid to the recent past and current economy of the community. This economic understanding will enable local leaders to better anticipate future economic problems, and it will place the needs of the local economy in a clearer perspective. Furthermore, the impact of recent plant closings will also be better understood.

Demographic Concerns

Part of Lincoln City lies in Calvin County (a small western portion). However, for purposes of this study, Madison County will be used as the primary data point.

Population in Lincoln City has been declining since 1970. In fact, the rate of decrease has been accelerating, with that trend projected to continue through the year 2000. The city's share of Madison County population has declined from 40.8% in 1970 to 34.3% in 1990, and is projected to reach only 31.5% in the year 2000.

Madison County, which also declined in population between 1980 and 1990, declined at a slower rate than Lincoln City. In fact, Lincoln City accounted for 39.4% of the county's population loss during that decade. According to the U.S. Bureau of Census estimates, Madison County grew by 1.8 % from 1990 to mid-1996, and Calvin County increased by 4.2%. During this same period, the State of Illinois increased its population by 3.6%.

Generally, population losses primarily occur as a result of deteriorating economic conditions in a community or region. This is clearly borne out by the decline in numbers of people, particularly

those of working age in this area. This out-migration is not likely to stop unless new employment opportunities come into the community.

At the same time that Madison County and Lincoln City have been losing population (1980-1990), the population has also been aging. DRI-McGraw Hill projects that Madison County will have a decline in the 25 to 44 age group between 1995 and 2005, whereas Calvin County will experience a slight gain. The 45 to 64 age group is projected grow by 44 % during this ten-year period, reflecting the aging of the baby boomers.

The population age 65 years and older actually increased in number during the past decade. That age group's share of the county's population increased from 15.7% in 1980 to 17% in 1990, although it is projected to remain at that level through the year 2000. According to projections by DRI-McGraw Hill, those over 65 will increase by 9.4% between 1995 and 2005. By contrast, those 65 and over constituted only 12.5% of the state of Illinois' population in 1990. The growing concentration of elderly imposes additional social costs on the area, and the declining younger segment of the population reduces the availability of workers for future growth of jobs and income.

The county has a much higher percentage of families in the income categories below \$30,000 annual income than the state; and a significantly lower percentage of families in the income ranges above \$50,000 annually than the state. In 1990, 13.2% of Madison County's families were below the poverty level, while only 9% of the families in the State overall were so classified.

Madison County's income per capita in 1990 was only 76.3% of Illinois'. Furthermore, the state experienced an increase of 85.3% in income per capita between 1980 and 1990, versus only 79.8% in Madison County. During that same period, Lincoln City's per capita income increased by 75.4%, which is comparable to that of the county. In 1979, Madison County's per capita income level was 93.4 % of that of Lincoln City; in 1989, this had dropped to 92.7 %. Calvin County's per capita income was comparable to that of Madison County. Regardless, Lincoln City's per capita income levels were only 81.6% of that of the State in 1989.

According to data from Woods and Poole Economics, in 1996 income per capita in Madison County was only 86.7% of that of the State; Calvin County's income per capita was 84.4% that of Illinois. Data from the June 1996 *Survey of Current Business* showed that Madison County's per capita income in 1994 was only 78.2% of that of the State; while Calvin County's was 85%. However, according to this 1994 data, both counties had a per capita income level that exceeded that of the non-metropolitan portion of the State.

Wages and salaries declined from 60% of Madison County's personal income in 1980 to 50.6% in 1996, compared to 61.5% and 58.8% respectively for Illinois as a whole. Transfer payments to persons rose from 20.9% of Madison County's personal income in 1980 to 25.6% in 1996. By comparison, in Illinois transfer payments represented only 12.9% of

personal income in 1980 and 15.1% in 1996. This indicates that Madison County is experiencing a loss of income from gainful employment and an increased dependency on income from social security, AFDC, etc.

Although Calvin County had only 28.4% of its personal income in wages and salaries in 1980 and 32.4% in 1996, it also had only 12.9% of its income from transfer payments in 1980 and 15.1% in 1996. This county received a residence adjustment that accounted for 17.3% of its personal income in 1996, compared to a negative adjustment for Madison County.

In 1990, Lincoln City lagged behind the County and State in the percentage of adults who graduated from high school, and behind the State in percentage of adults who graduated from a four-year college.

Labor Force

A declining and aging population will have a major negative impact on the growth potential of the local labor force in Lincoln City. Between 1980 and 1990, Madison County experienced a decline of 3.3% in the size of population between the ages 20 to 64, which is the working age category. It remains to be seen whether or not the Woods & Poole projection of a 1% increase in this age group by the year 2000 does indeed occur.

The number of people in the Madison and Calvin County labor force did increase from 1990 to 1996, growing from a total of 35,670 in 1990 to 38,039 in 1996. This has occurred through a steady annual increase over that period. The total size of the four county labor market area for Lincoln City (also including Washington and Jefferson Counties) was 64,055 in 1996, according to the Illinois Department of Employment Security. The ability of the area to sustain this growth in size of the labor force is likely to depend to a great extent on the continued creation of new employment opportunities.

Madison County has had an unemployment rate that has been significantly higher than that of the State during the decade of the 90s. The 1996 unemployment rate of 8.6% was higher than the 8.1% level in 1995, but significantly lower than the 12.4% high in 1990. Neighboring Calvin and Washington counties, has consistently had an unemployment level close to that of the State's and well below that of Madison and Jefferson counties. However, the Lincoln City Labor Market Area as a whole has been experiencing a higher unemployment rate than the average for the state during the 90s, although this overall rate was annually lower than that of Madison County.

The closing of three key manufacturing plants added approximately 480 experienced manufacturing employees to the number of available workers in the community. At an average wage rate of \$9.00 per hour across the three firms, this represents an annual loss of income of \$9.2 million to the community.

In 1990, only 20.1% of the county's labor force worked outside Madison County, which is below the average of 21.5% average for the state. Employers in Lincoln City generally define their labor drawing area as a 25 to 30 mile radius from the city. The four-county area

around Lincoln City encompasses a labor force of more than 63,000 people. In 1990, Madison County provided the most significant source of commuters into Calvin County; the exact reverse was true for Madison County. Jefferson and Washington counties were also significant sources of commuters for the two counties.

Manufacturing labor costs in Lincoln City are 15% less than the U.S. average, and nearly 10% below the average for Illinois. This reflects in part the existing base of the manufacture of non-durable goods, which typically have a lower wage base than durable goods.

Clerical wages are also lower in Lincoln City than nationally or in the rest of the state. Starting rates for clerical employees (high school graduate with keyboard skills) are approximately \$5.50 per hour, with more experienced clerical workers earning \$6.00 to \$8.00 per hour.

Employment Base

The percentage of employment in manufacturing in Lincoln City was slightly below that of the county. Compared to manufacturing employment in Illinois as a whole, Lincoln City has a higher percentage in nondurable manufacturing (which tends to pay a lower wage than durable manufacturing) and a lower percentage in durable manufacturing.

Madison County has a large base of experienced manufacturing workers. In fact, the county has the third largest number of manufacturing jobs in Southern Illinois, outside the Metro East area (St. Clair and Madison counties). Over 5,000 manufacturing workers are employed in Madison County, representing 30% of the county's total employment. Nationwide, only 17% of workers are employed in manufacturing.

The data on personal income from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis demonstrates the higher value added and wages from durable vs. nondurable goods in this labor market. In 1994, personal income from durable goods in Madison and Calvin counties accounted for 60.5% of total personal income in manufacturing.

Woods & Poole data indicates that Illinois lost 231,690 manufacturing jobs since 1980. During this same period, Madison and Calvin counties gained 2,520 manufacturing jobs, its employment trend running counter to that of the State. The data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security reports that Madison and Calvin counties gained 1,433 manufacturing jobs from 1991 to 1996.

According to Dun & Bradstreet data, Lincoln City has 40% of the total manufacturing employment and half of the total manufacturing facilities in Madison County. Two of the top 5 manufacturing employers in the county are located in Lincoln City. According to the D&B data, only 7 new manufacturing firms were established in Madison County within the last three years (1994-1996), all of which were under 100 employees in size. The two largest of these firms were in sporting and athletic goods.

According to a directory of manufacturers published by the Lincoln City Chamber of Commerce in October 1996, the leading industrial employers in the community were:

<u>Manufacturing Firm</u>	<u>Products</u>	<u>Number of Employees</u>
	Automotive parts	1,184
	Fuses	390
	Wood pallets	350
	Accessories for mobile home transporters	280
	Plastic containers	240
	Fiberglass wall & tub enclosures	165
	Paperboard cartons	162
	Water system equipment	82
	Refrigerator magnets	80

Over the last several years, local expansions and new firms have created over \$150 million in new investment in Lincoln City.

In 1996, Lincoln City lost two major employers through plant closings. This job loss is reflected in the data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security for Madison and Calvin counties. From 1995 to 1996, Madison County lost 22 jobs in manufacturing, and Calvin County lost 23 jobs, reversing the growth trend that has been occurring since 1991.

Despite these important recent manufacturing employment losses in Lincoln City, the Madison County Labor Market Area has added 310 jobs in manufacturing from January 1997 to July 1997. Durable goods manufacturing grew by 380 jobs during these seven months, while nondurable goods manufacturing declined by 60 jobs. However, the July 1997 employment level of 5,590 total manufacturing jobs was still below the average number of jobs for 1996, which was 5,640.

Employment in wholesale trade in Madison and Calvin counties has declined by 11.5% since 1991.

Employment in such services as business and repair services, personal services, and entertainment and recreation services in Lincoln City is also below the percentage level of the county. On the other hand, the percentage of employment in finance, insurance, real estate, health services, other professional services, and public administration is significantly above that of the county and state. The higher percentage of employees in these services is likely to partially account for the higher per capita income levels in Lincoln City in 1989 as compared to Madison County.

Employment in services in the Lincoln City Labor Market Area increased by 20% from 1990 to 1996. However, since November of 1996 through July of 1997, the number of employees

in services in the Madison County Labor Market Area has declined by -3%. This is a significant negative economic impact for the area, since growth in jobs in professional and business services is reflective of a healthy well-rounded economy.

The decline in population and therefore new housing, together with a rather stagnant economy, has resulted in a continuing decline in construction activity and employment. The stagnant economy is evidenced by the decline in employment from 1980 to 1990 in such sectors as wholesale trade, retail trade, finance, insurance, and real estate.

Retail Trade Activity

Total retail sales in Madison and Calvin counties declined 6.6% between 1980 and 1990, according to Woods & Poole data. During this same period, Illinois experienced a 7.2% increase in retail sales. However, from 1990 to 1996, retail sales in the two counties grew by 8.6%, which was still below the 9.4% growth rate for the State. Over 85% of this recent retail growth in the two counties was in general merchandise and in automobile dealers. In 1996, retail sales per capita in the two counties was \$6,546, compared to \$8,029 at the State level.

Personal income from retail trade increased by 29.4% from 1990 to 1994 in Madison and Calvin counties, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Employment in retail trade in Madison County rose steadily from 1991 to 1995, and decreased by almost 5% from 1995 to 1996, according to the Illinois Department of Employment Security. Retail trade employment in Calvin County experienced a major spurt in 1993, but has grown only 2.7% from 1993 to 1996. However, in the first 7 months of 1997, employment in retail trade grew by 80 employees in the Madison County Labor Market Area, an increase of 3.4%.

Conclusions

Given Lincoln City's location on the corner of four large counties, it is difficult to be precise regarding many socio-economic trends since most of the data is by county. However, it would appear that the community is experiencing a decline in its economic status. Despite the loss of certain manufacturing plants in the last three years, employment in manufacturing continues to grow. However, growth in the services lags the rest of the state, reflecting the declining attraction for professionals in the community.

It is important to note that between 80 and 90% of the jobs created in the U.S. over the next ten years will be in service-oriented industries. The high current dependence of Lincoln City on manufacturing is likely to impact its future growth. Certainly, it is desirable to continue to attract moderate to high wage manufacturing jobs into the community, but attention also needs to be paid to attracting and retaining business services, health care services, and other high wage service jobs if the community is to achieve a healthy and balanced economy.

Economic Base Study Exercise

Based on the case study of Lincoln City, in small groups study this economic base analysis and prepare brief conclusions regarding Lincoln City's economic base for each of the following areas:

- ☐ *Demographic concerns (income and education)*
- ☐ *Labor force issues*
- ☐ *Employment base*
- ☐ *Retail trade activity*

What steps could be taken to analyze the local agriculture situation beyond that of employment?

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

In addition to the economic base analysis, a better understanding of the community can also be gained by attempting to “objectively” assess it. The following example should help direct the actions of a Research Core Group to conduct such an assessment:

An Economic Assessment of Forest County, New York

POPULATION

Forest County has been a recent bright spot in the population dynamics of the state of New York. While most of the state has been experiencing a very slow rate of growth (.24 percent annually between 1980 and 1990), since 1980 Forest County has been growing at a rate above the national average (2.33 percent from 1980 to 1990, vs. .94 percent for the nation). The County's share of the state's population increased from .5 percent in 1980 to .62 percent in 1990. Much of this change can be attributed to the reactivation of the U.S. Army's Fort Mohawk, just outside of the City of Center City. Approximately 10,600 military soldiers are assigned to Fort Mohawk, and they bring with them approximately 9,800 family members.

This level of growth hasn't always been the case. From 1900 to 1980, the County grew only 14.9 percent, gaining only 11,400 residents. In contrast, during the same period, the State experienced a growth rate of 141.6 percent. Forest County declined in population by .04 percent annually from 1970 to 1980, from 88,508 to 88,151. By comparison, however, the population in New York decreased by .38 percent annually during that period.

The City of Center City is the major population center for the County, but it did not share in the County's growth during the 1980-90 period. It experienced only a .55 percent annual growth. As the largest city in the County, its share of the population decreased from 32 percent of total County population in 1980 to 27 percent in 1990.

The estimated 1993 population of Forest County was 113,964, an annual increase of .90 percent from 1990.

In 1990, 76.4 percent of the County's population reported that they had graduated from high school, and 13.6 percent held bachelor degrees or higher degrees. This compares with 75.2 percent and 20.3 percent respectively for the nation. Furthermore, Forest County had the lowest percentage of college graduates among the competitor locations (see attached matrix). The

County is clearly not attracting or retaining college graduates, but the local population is generally well educated.

The relatively low percentage of the County's population that was over 65 (10.9 percent) in 1990 indicates that the area has not become an important retirement location. By comparison, 12.6 percent of the nation's population is over 65 years old. Furthermore, Forest County's percentage of elderly has declined from 13 percent of the total population in 1980.

In 1992, Forest County had a per capita income of \$15,535. This is \$4,570 less than the national level of \$20,105. Between 1987 and 1992, per capita income in the U.S. grew by \$4,467; during that same period it increased by only \$3,066 in Forest County. The County is clearly falling farther behind national income levels, which can be attributed to the loss of higher paying jobs in manufacturing and the failure to attract higher paying jobs in other sectors such as business services.

LABOR

As of 1990, 14.1 percent of Forest County's population was between the ages of 18 and 24. This age group constitutes the primary source of new entrants to the workforce. By comparison, only 10.8 percent of the nation's population is in this age range. This higher figure for Forest County is a clear reflection of the presence of the military at Fort Mohawk.

In 1990, 32.0 percent of the County's population was in the 25 to 44 age category; the U.S. percentage was 32.5 percent. This age group represents the core of the potential work force, and the Forest County statistics indicate a relatively favorable labor force situation.

In the 1980s, Forest County experienced a 1.35 percent increase in the size of the labor force, which was well below the population growth rate. The labor force peaked at 47,800 in 1989. However, from 1990 to 1993, the Forest County labor force declined by .73 percent annually, reaching only 45,100 by 1993. This indicates that the initial impact of the Fort Mohawk expansion has diminished.

This area typically experiences high unemployment levels, with seasonal shifts due to summer tourism. For example, from October 1992 to October 1993, the unemployment rate hit a low of eight percent in July, and a high of 13.4 percent in February. Long term unemployment hovers above ten percent. The average 1994 unemployment rate of 10.8 percent was by far the highest among the competitor locations (see matrix). Unemployment for the first quarter of 1995 was 12 percent.

An important source of labor in Forest County is the pool of spouses associated with Fort Mohawk. Most of these military families are stationed in the area for a minimum of three years, and the typical military family has a large demand for a second income. Military retirees can be another important source of skilled and experienced workers.

Clearly, Forest County has a relatively large pool of available workers, particularly at the assembly and lower-skilled levels. According to a comparison of the 1990 Census of Population and 1993 data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Forest County had a significantly lower percentage of workers employed in the "white collar" occupations than the

U.S. average (see table below), and a higher percentage of blue collar (primarily manufacturing) workers. The closure of New York Air Brakes plant made a number of skilled manufacturing workers, such as tool & die and machinists, available locally. However, several firms indicated a problem in obtaining more highly educated personnel, such as engineers or technicians. There appears to be a significant supply of clerical workers at low to moderate wages.

Occupation Category	Forest County (1990) % of Total Employment	U.S. (1993) % of Total
Managerial/Professional	23.2	27.1
Technical/Sales/Administrative Support	29.3	30.9
Service	17.0	13.8
Blue Collar	30.4	28.2

In Forest County, only 4.7 percent of the workers commuted outside of the County. By comparison, 34 percent of workers in the State overall commuted outside their county of residence.

Average weekly wages in Forest County tend to be around 2/3 of the State average, and less than residents of other urbanized New York counties. Average weekly earnings in 1993 for all industries in Forest County were \$397.69, and in manufacturing were \$576.70. The average hourly manufacturing wage was \$14.41 per hour in 1993, which is well above the \$11.97 average for the state and which reflects the relatively high wages of the pulp and paper industry. A number of firms in other industries evidently pay as much as \$5 to \$6 an hour less as an average wage and have no problem attracting applicants. Earnings in services were only \$392.48, reflecting the absence of higher wage service industries.

A 1993 NCA survey and interviews of employers indicated that local firms experienced minimal problems with turnover and absenteeism. Labor productivity generally was rated as average to good. One Canadian firm indicated that productivity in their Forest County plant was higher than their Canadian plant. Firms also indicated that there was a good work ethic. Approximately 45 percent of the manufacturing employees belong to a union, according to the NCA survey. However, most new operations are reported to be non-union.

ECONOMIC BASE

Forest County has had a resource-based economy for many years. The area was settled due to its agricultural potential and the water power from the Black River which powered the mills. The paper industry has historically been the County's largest manufacturing sector, drawing much of their raw material from the timber resources of the region.

The agricultural industry is the largest source of earnings in the County, with dairy production accounting for 90 to 95 % of total agricultural production. The county has consistently been the second or third largest milk-producing county in New York, and has approximately 30,000 milking cows. However, the production of milk declined by 13 % from 1984 to 1991.

As was stated earlier, this community has become the population growth center for its region. Although Forest County experienced 5.8 % annual growth in employment between 1982 (the lowest level of the 80s) and 1989, employment declined annually by 1.1 % from 1989 (the highest peak since 1970) to 1994-95. In 1970, manufacturing was the largest employer in Forest County, with 7,000 workers. Employment in this important sector declined through the 70s and 80s. In 1990, manufacturing constituted only 17.5 % of total employment in the County, which was below that of all the competitor locations (see matrix). Conversely, employment in services grew from 4,200 in 1970 to 8,500 in 1993, an annual growth rate of 3.1 %.

In 1993, Forest County had an employment base of 36,497 (employment covered by unemployment insurance), according to the NYS Department of Labor. The breakdown of employment is as follows:

Employment Category	# of Employees	% of Total	U.S. % of Total
Construction	1,002	2.8	4.3
Manufacturing	4,231	11.6	15.9
Transport/Public Utilities	1,924	5.3	5.2
Wholesale/Retail Trade	9,561	26.2	23.2
F.I.R.E.	1,332	3.6	6.0
Services	7,880	21.6	28.0
Government	10,304	28.2	16.8

By comparison to comparable U.S. percentages, Forest County is clearly an important center of trade. Most of the employment and growth in this sector is in retail rather than wholesale activity. On the other hand, manufacturing employment levels are below those of the nation. Construction, finance/insurance/real estate, and services are well below those of the U.S. The most dramatic statistic is the government employment, which is more than ten percentage points above the national average. The high level of government employment is due in part to Fort Mohawk.

Employment Category	(1990-1993) Annual % Change in Employment	Annual U.S. % Change
Construction	-16.2	-1.3
Manufacturing	-7.9	-1.9
Transport/Public Utilities	-3.0	-.1
Wholesale/Retail Trade	.7	-.1
F.I.R.E.	-8.6	.1
Services	.8	2.7
Government	-1.2	.9
TOTAL	-2.1	.3

It is clear from the above statistics that the explosive growth in employment triggered by the expansion of Fort Mohawk has now disappeared.

Recent changes in manufacturing employment by two-digit SIC are as follows:

Manufacturing Industries	Employment In		1988-1992 Annual % Change
	1992	1988	
Food & Kindred Products	437	385	-3.1
Textile Mill Products	0	60	NA
Apparel	35	45	6.5
Lumber and Wood Products	130	92	-8.3
Paper and Allied Products	1330	1330	0.0
Printing and Publishing	420	399	-1.3
Chemicals and Allied Products	125	130	1.0
Rubber and Plastics Products	60	60	0.0
Stone, Clay, and Glass Products	71	64	-2.6
Primary Metal Industries	125	60	-16.8
Fabricated Metal Products	0	10	NA
Machinery, except Electrical	385	248	-10.4
Electric and Electronic Equipment	513	375	-7.5
Transportation Equipment	1305	750	-12.9
Instruments and Related Products	125	175	8.8
TOTAL	5061	4225	-4.4

Source: County Business Patterns

The preceding data indicates that certain manufacturing sectors in Forest County have borne the brunt of employment declines; namely, transportation equipment, non-electrical machinery, electric and electronic equipment, and primary metal industries. No industry has grown by more than 100 employees over the past four years, and the number of manufacturing firms (89 in 1992, according to County Business Patterns) has grown by only 12 since 1982.

Canadian firms have made inroads into Forest County. These include such operations as paper conversion, picture frames, athletic and medical adhesive tapes, small zinc die cast items, and car fresheners.

Forest County has historically been an important tourist destination. The Thousand Islands of the St. Lawrence River, the Adirondacks, and eastern Lake Ontario have successfully drawn visitors from the northeastern states and southeastern Canada over the years. It would appear that this area has considerable potential to increase the level of tourism significantly. This is particularly true of winter sports potential, such as cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

LOCATION

Forest County is located in the northern part of "upstate" New York.

TRANSPORTATION

The major route through the County is Interstate 21, running north-south. It connects to Canada's important east-west Highway 401 midway between Montreal and Toronto, and to such points to the south as Syracuse and Knoxville TN, as well as providing access to New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington DC.

U.S. Route 31 serves as a major east-west route connecting Center City with Interstate 21 near the Canadian border, continuing on in parallel with I-81 to Syracuse. Other State routes converge on Center City, making it the major crossroads in this part of the state.

Currently, at least 12 common carrier trucking firms provide less-than-truckload service in the county. Forest County currently has more incoming freight than outbound freight, which provides an opportunity to negotiate cheaper back-haul rates.

Center City International Airport is located four miles west of Center City. At the present time, no commercial airlines serve the area. The airfield consists of two runways, each 5,000 feet in length, and is equipped with ILS capability. The nearest commercial airport is in Syracuse, which is a major regional facility.

CONRAIL provides limited commercial freight railroad service in the County. Some firms can get service only twice a week. Service is available from Syracuse to Center City to Fort Mohawk and St. Lawrence County. A main line of CONRAIL runs through Forest County and several spurs are active, but their use is well under capacity. The nearest piggyback and container loading yards are in Syracuse. Passenger rail service is not available.

Two seaports are approximately 60 miles distance from Center City. The Port of Ogdensburg is located on the St. Lawrence Seaway in St. Lawrence County and the Port of Oswego is located on Lake Ontario south of Center City.

Small package delivery services are available overnight from United Parcel Service and Federal Express. All of the services of the U.S. Postal Service are also available in the area. A new USPS regional mail processing facility was built in Center City in the early 90s.

UTILITIES

Forest County receives its electric service from the Niagara Mohawk Power Company. All existing generation facilities in the County are hydroelectric. According to data from the Edison Electric Institute, electric costs in the New York communities, including Forest County, are well above those of competitor locations. State and local taxes constitute 47 percent of utility bills for industrial customers; this figure is only 4 to 13 percent in most other states. However, a special power rate can be negotiated, and significant rate discounts are available in the Economic Development Zone (EDZ).

Niagara Mohawk also provides natural gas to the Forest County in certain corridors. Comparative rates are not available, but Niagara Mohawk provides an Economic Development Rate as an incentive to expanding or relocating businesses.

Telephone service is provided by several carriers. The rural communities are served by either

Continental Telephone or Township Telephone. Center City is served by NYNEX, which is totally a DMS digital switched network. This network consists of twelve strategically located central offices that hub in Center City and are then linked to the world by a fiber optic network. Cellular service is available in many parts of the County.

Of the 20 villages in Forest County, 14 have a community wastewater facility, and 18 have some type of community water supply. The City of Center City's water and sewer system has undergone major upgrades in response to the new service demands of Fort Mohawk. Center City's water system has a capacity of 15 million gallons per day. The City has committed to serving a peak demand of three million gallons per day to Fort Mohawk. The average usage of the entire Center City system (minus Fort Mohawk) is 7.2 million gallons per day. This varies throughout the year, with the highest demand occurring in the summer. During peak demand periods, the water treatment plant often operates at a flow rate of 10 million gallons per day. The source of water is the Red River, which is stored in two covered reservoirs and an elevated tank.

Center City's water pollution control plant is currently rated at 13.4 million gallons per day, with an average daily flow of 10 million gallons per day.

INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL SITES AND BUILDINGS

There is very little private commercial real estate activity in the Center City area. The economic development organization has successfully marketed around 400,000 square feet of space from 1983 to 1993 at the Forest County Industrial Park, basically filling it up. This park is located at the intersection of State Route 13F and I-21, and it is fully serviced with water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, and roads. The park is also a designated Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ). Approximately 14 acres remain available. However, the park can expand on an additional 100 acres currently under option. The Industrial Development Authority will sell sites or will do a build-to-suit and lease back space. Other industrial parks include Green's Industrial Park located to the north of the Forest County Industrial Park, with approximately 30 acres of vacant land, and the City Center Drive Industrial Park, which is proposed for a 128 acre site in the city that lies along the rail line and which is part of the EDZ.

Industrial land prices in the Center City area range from \$8,500 to \$15,000 per acre for fully developed sites. This is the lowest cost of any of the competitor locations for which comparable data was available (see matrix).

A limited amount of vacant industrial space in relatively newer buildings exists in Forest County. The New York Air Brake building (now titled the Center City Industrial Center) provides approximately 370,000 square feet of space (excluding mezzanines) in four facilities that were constructed between 1915 and 1917. This building is being redeveloped and marketed by the Center City Industrial Center Local Development Corporation. Although the facility offers potential for multi-tenant occupancy, it will require considerable investment in renovating the buildings with roof repairs, side wall insulation, and heating systems as well as interior finishing. At the present time, the industrial site itself is not attractive. Lease rates in the buildings ranges from \$1.50 to \$4.00 per square feet, depending on tenant location and use.

According to data from the Board of Realtors, warehousing lease rates are \$1 to \$2 per square foot, and for manufacturing are \$2 to \$4.50 per square foot.

Office space availability in the Forest County area is also very limited. There is Class C space available in the New York Air Brake facility.

Office space was listed at \$8.50 to \$12 per square foot or less in 1994, the lease rate depending on the location and quality of space. Class B and C space leases for \$3.50 to \$7.50 per square foot. No designated office park sites exist in the Center City area for the construction of new office space.

BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES

Local employers indicated that most necessary support services were available in the Forest County area, but that specialty needs or needs for larger companies may be absent locally. Generally, these needs are obtained from the metro areas of Syracuse or Buffalo.

TAXES

Corporate taxes in Forest County are certainly higher than in states in the southeastern U.S., but generally are not much higher than other northeastern U.S. locations. Some of the tax burden can be lessened by the incentives available in the Center City Economic Development Zone.

BUSINESS FINANCING

Two Forest County Revolving Loan Funds are available for public financing of business expansion at the Center City Industrial Center. These funds provide loans for machinery and equipment, fixed assets, and, in some cases, working capital.

The Forest County Industrial Development Agency/Revolving Loan Fund EDZ 1-2-3 is an interest deferral financing program targeted at manufacturing businesses located within the Center City EDZ. Loans generally range from \$25,000 to \$200,000.

The Center City Local Development Corporation, a local LDC, provides financing for eligible business located or locating in the EDZ, including those locating at the Center City Industrial Center. They will consider loan requests up to a total of \$5 million for eligible commercial projects within the Center City EDZ. Emphasis is placed on job creation and renovation of existing structures.

The Regional Development Authority is responsible for administering a leasehold improvement revolving loan fund specifically for business development in the Center City Industrial Center. These funds were granted to the community by the State of New York. The Development Authority also recently authorized \$1 million to participate in the Excelsior Linked Deposit Program. The program provides qualified businesses with an interest subsidy

enabling them to obtain more competitive interest rates on loans for expansion. Working with one of the Authority's members, business borrowers can access the UDC's Regional Revolving Loan Trust Fund, the RECD Intermediary Relending Program, the Adirondack Economic Development Corporation's SBA Microloan Demonstration Program and Certified Development Company Loan Program, and numerous local revolving loan funds.

BUSINESS INCENTIVES

In Center City, the Economic Development provides a full range of EDZ benefits to certified businesses. The EDZ includes the Center City Industrial Center site. A real property tax incentive package is available that provides a 100 percent exemption in years 1 through 7, a 75 percent exemption in year 8, a 50 percent exemption in year 9, and a 25 percent exemption in year 10. The property reverts to full taxation in year 11. The abatement is available on the proposed improvements only.

The EDZ also allows certified businesses a wage tax credit for each new full time employee hired within the zone. The tax credit may be taken for up to five consecutive years within the ten year life of the zone program. The credit is accessed following the first year that new employees are hired and is equivalent to \$1,500 for targeted employees paid at least 135 percent of minimum wage and \$750 for all other new employees.

Capital investments made to production property within the EDZ may be qualified for the economic development zone investment tax credit of 10 percent for business corporations. Eligible investments include acquisition or construction of production facilities and associated machinery and equipment purchases.

The franchise tax on business corporations provides that an additional three percent credit (30 percent of the economic development zone investment tax credit) may be allowed in each of the three years following the year in which the EDZ investment tax credit was taken. To qualify for this second credit, known as the economic development zone employment incentive credit (EDZ-EIC), the taxpayer must employ at least 101 percent of the average number of people employed in the year before the EDZ investment tax credit was claimed.

Additional incentives available through the Center City EDZ program include a NYNEX rate reduction of 5 percent for all intrastate and intra-LATA charges, and sales tax refunds of 7 percent for all building materials used in conjunction with the facility.

Eligible businesses can also receive a utility rate reduction from Niagara Mohawk Power's EDZ Rider Program. These rates are tied to permanent increases in demand, and may vary according to business service classification and amount of usage. The term of the discount is for 10 years, and begins upon the initial receipt of rate reductions from Niagara Mohawk. In addition to reduced cost per kilowatt, the EDZ Rider Program eliminates demand charges associated with the increased energy use. Finally, the Niagara Mohawk ECA Rider offers savings on natural gas costs for certified zone businesses that increase their monthly gas consumption. This incentive is also for a ten year period, and actual rates are determined through negotiation with Niagara Mohawk.

Forest County has established Foreign Trade Zone 112. It is located at the Forest County Industrial Park.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Forest Community College is a two-year academic institution located just outside Center City. It has of approximately 1,700 full-time and 1,300 part-time students, with an average age of over 25. FCC offers Certificate Programs in Accounting, Computer Information Services, Hospitality and Tourism, Office Studies, Retail Merchandising, etc. JCC also offers Associate Degrees in Business Administration, Computer Information Systems, Engineering Science, Accounting, Retail Business Management, Science Lab Technology, Hospitality and Tourism, and Office Technologies, among others.

FCC is a member of the State University of New York (SUNY). The Consortium was created to provide college-level courses leading to certificates, two-year and four-year undergraduate degrees, and graduate-level degrees; this program had 4,100 students enrolled in it in 1995.

FCC also offers training services to business and industry, including contract training, cooperative training, and scheduled workshops and seminars. Training courses that have been operated recently include: quality and competitiveness, workforce skills, and computer training. FCC can go on site with its training if the company has training space. For all practical purposes, no state subsidy exists for such training.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Because Center City/Forest County is not a metropolitan area, many quality-of-life comparisons are difficult. Sources such as *Places Rated Almanac* and *Money* magazine only rate the metropolitan areas. The housing market in Forest County appears to be relatively stable at this time. The housing industry experienced a large increase in the number of new housing units when

the Fort Mohawk expansion was announced in 1984. The introduction of 23,000 people to the County in less than five years stimulated a rise in housing prices and unprecedented construction activity. The median housing sales price soared 86% from 1984 to 1988 in Forest County.

The average age of the housing stock in the County is high. According to the 1990 Census, 52.6 % of all housing units were built prior to 1940. Although educational systems are difficult, if not impossible, to rate comparatively on a meaningful basis, input from local employers indicated local schools were perceived as good to very good.

Forest County offers access to a wide range of recreational resources. Thirteen State parks and nine State forests are located in the County. There are also eight county forest lands and 11 game management areas. The St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario provide unlimited water recreation opportunities. The Thousands Island area, well known as a major summer resort, is located in north Forest County. Whitewater rafting is available on the Red River. The Adirondacks are located near the County.

Cultural and historical resources are also prevalent in the area.

Medical service in the County is primarily provided by the Regional Medical Center, located in Center City. This medical center is a regional referral center, and it is part of the Regional Health System, which is the leading provider of health-care services for a five-county area. Two additional smaller hospitals are also available.

There are 11 public school districts in the County, and 8 private/parochial schools. The high school drop-out rate has been somewhat consistent with that of the State overall.

The serious crime rate in Forest County in 1993 was 2,137 per 100,000 population. This was less than half the rate for New York overall (5,533) or for the U.S. average (5,550).

Although resorts exist in the northern part of the county along the St. Lawrence River and comfortable accommodations can be found in Center City, no 3 to 5 star hotels or motels are located in Forest County, according to the 1995 *Mobil Travel Guide*. Also, there are no 3 to 5 star restaurants.

Forest County has long and sometimes severe winters, and warm and moderate summers. Spring and fall tend to be short seasons. In winter, the average temperature is 21 degrees Fahrenheit. In summer, the average temperature is 68 degrees. The sun shines 65 % of the time in summer and 40% of the time in winter. Total precipitation for the year averages 40 inches. Annual average snowfall is about 101 inches, but occasionally a winter snowfall will range up to 300 inches.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

The Forest County Job Development Corporation serves as the primary economic development and marketing agency for the communities of the County. It was created in 1994. Under contract with various organizations and municipalities, the FCJDC operates and/or administers the Forest County Industrial Development Agency, its Industrial Park, and its financing and tax incentive programs; the Center City EDZ Program; and the Center City Industrial Center LDC. Approximately 75 percent of the funding presently comes from local government.

The Forest County Industrial Development Agency was established in 1971 with the mission of stimulating local industrial growth through the issuance of industrial revenue bonds. The agency has expanded its role to become a financial packaging service providing businesses assistance in accessing the range of financing programs available at the State and Federal levels.

The Center City Industrial Center Local Development Corporation is comprised of the following: Forest County Job Development Corporation, Forest County Industrial Agency, Center City Local Development Corporation, County of Forest, City of Center City, New York Air Brake Corporation, and the Regional Development Authority. On-going administrative services for the CCICLDC are carried out via a contract for services with the FCJDC.

The Regional Development Authority was created by the New York State Legislature in 1985 for the purpose of "supplying the infrastructure required by the expansion of Fort Mohawk, and lever-aging the expansion for the economic well-being of the citizens of this region." The organization is involved in housing renovation and subsidized housing projects, solid waste management, water and sewer service for Ft. Mohawk, grants to local fire departments, making business loans, and doing regional marketing.

The Regional Office of the New York State Department of Economic Development provides additional business assistance. The Department maintains offices in Toronto and Montreal.

The Thousand Islands Bridge Authority operates the tourism attraction program for Forest County. It receives its funds from the local "bed" tax.

SWOT Analysis Exercise

Based on the case study of Forest County, in small groups prepare a list of the strengths and weaknesses of this community.

What economic opportunities, including target industries, does Forest County have?

What threats to sustained growth and development is the community likely to face?

STEP 3: LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

The Facilitator will work with the Steering Committee to arrange for a full-day workshop for local stakeholders/leaders. This workshop will accomplish the following:

- ☐ Educate local leaders about major trends affecting North Dakota communities and what the “core elements” (housing, public infrastructure, economic development, public services) are in their community’s future.
- ☐ Report on the findings of the surveys and community assessment.
- ☐ Create the foundation for a vision statement.
- ☐ Identify the priority issues that need to be addressed in the community.
- ☐ Establish Strategic Action Teams to develop the strategic action plan.

The first task is to identify all of the stakeholders/leaders who should be invited to the workshop. The intent is to ensure that all significant interests within the community are represented. The pro-cess of identification described in Step 1 should be expanded upon to ensure broad participation.

The next task is to decide on a location that can accommodate this workshop. It must have a large meeting room for the entire group to assemble, and also enough space in that room for breakout sessions or nearby small rooms should be available. A catered lunch should be provided to all participants, and coffee and soft drinks should be available for a break in the morning and a break in the afternoon. An overhead projector and screen will be required, as will a flip chart and easel for each small group. The small groups should be no larger than eight participants. Masking tape and marker pens should also be provided for each small group.

An invitation letter should be drafted explaining the purpose of the workshop and why it is important to attend for the full day. This letter should be mailed to each invitee approximately four weeks before the workshop. Follow-up phone calls should be made by the Steering Committee approximately one week before the workshop. Efforts should be made to get publicity about the workshop in the local media.

The Steering Committee should also identify local individuals who could serve as facilitators of the small groups. These could be school teachers, government staff, retired professionals, etc.; they should not be key local leaders/stakeholders, since their input will be important to the process. These small group facilitators will be trained by the Strategic Planning Facilitator the day before the workshop in a two-hour training session.

The day before the leadership workshop, the Facilitator should come to the community to ensure that all arrangements are taken care of and to train the local facilitators. A meeting should be held with the Steering Committee to go over all the details.

At the workshop, the following agenda should be followed:

- 8:00 Registration and coffee
- 8:30 Introduction by the chairperson of the Steering Committee or other appropriate leader
- 8:45 Presentation by the Strategic Planning Facilitator on key global trends and “core” community development elements
- 9:30 Presentation of results of community assessment and surveys
- 10:00 Coffee break
- 10:15 Visioning exercise
- 12:00 Catered lunch
- 1:00 Prioritizing key development issues
- 2:30 Coffee break
- 2:45 Vote by all participants on final issues
- 3:00 Discussion of “path forward”
- 3:30 Report on priority issues and the establishing of the Strategic Action Teams
- 4:00 Wrap-up and dismissal

Prior to the workshop, participants should be assigned to their small groups by the Steering Committee. Their group number should be on their name badge when they register.

It is important to begin the workshop with a review of its purpose and value. Following that, a presentation on key social and economic trends affecting communities in North Dakota would be helpful to provide background to the participants. The “core elements” of community development need to be discussed. These include:

- ☐ **Housing** – rehabilitation and new construction of housing units to meet the local needs, including single-family, multi-family, and senior citizens.
- ☐ **Public Infrastructure** – water, sewer, streets and roads, transportation facilities, solid waste, tele-communications, etc.
- ☐ **Economic Development** – agriculture, workforce development, retail, manufacturing, distribution, back offices and call centers, tourism, etc.
- ☐ **Public Services** – education, recreation, government services, health care, public safety, community facilities, youth activities, senior citizen programs, etc.

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP VISIONING PROCESS

The Facilitator will begin the visioning process by telling the story about three stone masons in the Middle Ages.

Three stone masons in the middle ages were hard at work when a visitor came along and asked them what they were doing. The first stone mason was hard at work, sweat beading his brow. "I am cutting this stone," he grumbled. The second stone mason, though less distraught, responded with a deep sigh, "I'm building a parapet." The third stone mason, replied with a radiant face, "I am building a beautiful cathedral that will glorify God for centuries to come."

The third stone mason understood the grand vision for the cathedral, and the vision provided meaning to his life. Like the first two stone masons, many community leaders get caught up in the toil and drudgery of cutting one stone after another. Their creative energy gets sapped by the realization that there will **always be more problems than they can solve**. They may have a vision, but it is a vision of frustration without much hope. In contrast, "enlightened" leaders are like the third stone mason – inspired by a vision that is compelling and worthwhile.

The following materials are to be used for the visioning exercise. Using overhead slides, review the nature of a "vision" with the leadership. Each participant should have a copy of the following material.

CREATING A VISION FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY

A VISION:

- Is an ideal and unique view of the future
- Flows from the knowledge and experience of the leaders
- Is an attractive and desirable target
- Must be clear and perceived as attainable
- Gives a sense of purpose to the actions of the community and its organizations.

Envisioning involves a belief that we can influence our economic destiny by what we do **now**.

The vision statement establishes the general direction that the strategic planning process should take. It defines the future of the community or region as envisioned by local leadership. It is the "grand design" for local development.

Vision is seeing beyond the immediacy of the day. It is understanding the temper of the times, the outlines of the future, and how to move from one to the other. Vision is seeing where life is headed, and how to make the transition from here to there most effectively. Vision is seeing what life could be like while dealing with life as it is. Vision is having some sense of the inner impulse of the public soul and then giving it voice. Vision is seeing the potential purpose that's hidden in the chaos of the moment, yet which could bring to birth new possibilities for a people.

William Van Dusen Wishare – A World in Search of Meaning

"If you don't think about the future, you cannot have one."

"If you don't know where you are going, you will probably end up somewhere else."

VISIONING EXERCISE

We will begin this visioning process by looking at “values.” At the heart of a vision are the key *values* of the organization or community.

A value is:

- ☐ That which is worthwhile and important to us
- ☐ Abstract ideas that influence thinking and action
- ☐ Deep-seated standards that influence almost every aspect of our lives
- ☐ Our personal “bottom line”

1. List your personal values:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

2. List the values held by the community in general:

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

3. Compare the two lists.

4. How important are these values to the future of the community?

5. In small groups, determine which significant trends are occurring in the national and/or international environment that are likely to have an impact on your community? Make a list.
6. Determine which of these is likely to have the greatest impact on your community.

Now, imagine that this is the year 2010. Your hopes and expectations for the community have been realized. Significant changes have occurred, but the best of the past has been retained. The quality of life of the city and its economy meet the needs and desires of the residents.

What is your vision for the development of your community?

- ☐ What types of economic, governmental, and social activity would you like to see happen in the community in the future?
- ☐ What community values should be retained or developed as part of this vision?
- ☐ What type of jobs should be developed to meet the needs of the community and the workforce?
- ☐ What new infrastructure is needed to more effectively develop the community?
- ☐ What social and quality of life issues need to be resolved?
- ☐ What new attractions and facilities should be built?
- ☐ And so on!

Please describe in writing the five most important characteristics of that community.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

Visioning Session (Consensus-Building Process)

Each participant in the workshop will be asked to write down on the sheet provided the five major components of their vision for the community. This will be explained to them in the "full group" session. The participants will then be dismissed to their small groups or will begin working with their facilitator.

1. Ask each member of the group to share, in turn, one of his/her characteristics of the community in the year 2010. Write this on the flip chart. Go around the group getting one characteristic from each member. If the component or characteristic is *similar* to one already stated, try to combine them. If it is *identical* to something already stated, ask for another component from the individual.
2. Repeat the process, asking for a second characteristic.
3. Repeat the process asking for a third characteristic
4. Ask if any additional characteristics need to be listed.
5. Go through the list with the group and consolidate those characteristics that are similar.
6. Start with the first characteristic and determine if there is group consensus on the inclusion of it within a vision statement for the community. If not, move on to the second, the third, and so forth.
7. After you have determined those characteristics for which there is consensus, go back through the remaining to determine if consensus could be developed on any of those if minor changes or modifications could be made concerning the characteristic. Add those characteristics for which there is consensus to the list and eliminate those without consensus.
8. Working with the group, try to determine the priorities of the vision components. Give each component either an "H" for high priority or very important, "M" for moderate priority, or "L" for low priority or not very important. If complete consensus does not exist in rating a particular component, give the appropriate rating that the majority of the group believes is correct.
9. Rewrite the high priority components on a flip sheet to bring it back to the group as a whole for discussion.

The Strategic Planning Facilitator will take the results of the visioning exercise (i.e., the high priority components of the vision), and will craft a vision statement within a week or two of the workshop. This will be submitted to the Steering Committee for review and comment.

A Visioning Exercise for Training the Facilitators

In groups of 6 or so, use the process just described to create a list of priority components of a vision. To assure commonality of experience, we will use as our example the future of the state of North Dakota. What is your vision for North Dakota in the year 2010 as related to its economy, types of jobs being created, quality of life, infrastructure, etc.?

IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITIZING KEY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The afternoon exercise in the workshop will be the identifying and prioritizing of key development issues. This will take the participants from a “grand vision” of what they want

their community to become to coping with what needs to be done to get there.

The following forms are to be used by the participants in their determination of priority issues. The participants will first identify individually their key community issues. The small group process using the Nominal Group Technique will capture their issues and their priorities. The top 5 or 6 issues from each small group will be combined into one master list to be voted on by the whole session. This will result in a list of the key priorities for the development of the community.

KEY ISSUES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR COMMUNITY

Issues are to be thought of as **“problems”** to be solved, concerns or needs to be addressed, or opportunities to be pursued. **Issues should be stated clearly as problems, concerns, needs, or opportunities.** For example, "education" of itself is not a problem or concern; "a high percentage of high school graduates are illiterate and lack basic skills" is a problem.

You are asked to write down in no particular order what you consider to be the five most important issues currently facing your community relative to its economy or its quality of life.

Ranking	Key Issues
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

After you have written down your five most important issues, go back and rank them in order of importance to you. Give the most important a “5”, the next most important a “4”, then a “3”, then a “2”, and give the least important a “1”.

PRIORITY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES (A)

The following letters refer to the list of community and economic development issues that are listed alphabetically on the flip chart sheets. From that list, choose the five that you believe are the most important for the future of the Community. Place a “5” by the most important, a “4” by the second most important, a “3” by the third, a “2” by the fourth, and a “1” by the least important.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____

E. _____
F. _____
G. _____
H. _____
I. _____
J. _____
K. _____
L. _____
M. _____
N. _____
O. _____
P. _____
Q. _____
R. _____
S. _____
T. _____
U. _____
V. _____
W. _____
X. _____
Y. _____
Z. _____

PRIORITY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES (B)

The following letters refer to the list of community and economic development issues that are listed alphabetically on the composite list that combines the results from the small group process. From that list, choose the five that you believe are the most important for the future of the Community. Place a “5” by the most important, a “4” by the second most important, a “3” by the third, a “2” by the fourth, and a “1” by the least important.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____
- F. _____
- G. _____
- H. _____
- I. _____
- J. _____
- K. _____
- L. _____
- M. _____
- N. _____
- O. _____
- P. _____
- Q. _____
- R. _____
- S. _____
- T. _____
- U. _____
- V. _____
- W. _____
- X. _____
- Y. _____
- Z. _____

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS FOR DETERMINING PRIORITY ISSUES USING THE NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE

1. Break into smaller groups of no more than 8 people.
2. Each group member writes on the worksheet that has been provided what he or she considers one of the most important issues for economic development in the area. Each individual should complete a total of five issues.

Issues are to be thought of as problems to be solved, concerns or needs to be addressed, or opportunities to be pursued. Issues should be stated clearly as problems, concerns, needs, or opportunities. For example, “education” of itself is not a problem or concern; “a high percentage of high school graduates are illiterate and lack basic skills” is a problem.

3. Each member ranks his/her issues on the worksheet, giving the most important a “5” down to “1” for the least important.
4. Each member states his or her first priority issue in turn, going around the entire group once, and each issue is written on the flip chart.
5. The process is repeated a second, third, and possibly fourth time. If an issue is already stated, the group member should state the next one on his/her list. Continue process until all issues have been stated and recorded.
6. The facilitator should work with the group to attempt to consolidate similar or related issues into one issue as appropriate.
7. If necessary, some or all of the issues should be rewritten on the flip chart to ensure clarity. A letter of the alphabet in sequence should be placed in front of each issue.
8. Each member of the group chooses only five of the listed issues by circling the appropriate letters on the list provided. He or she should then rate these five issues on a 1 to 5 scale; 5 being most important, 1 least important. These ratings should be placed at the appropriate blank on the sheet.
9. Tabulate the results and display them on the flip chart.
10. Dismiss the group back to the main group and take the flip chart sheet with you. Report your group's list in order of priority to the larger group.
11. Assist in consolidating the lists of issues from each small group, the rating of the issues, and the tabulation of the results. The issue with the highest total number of points will be considered the highest priority issue.

After the results of the voting for the priority issues has been announced, Strategic Action Teams should be formed to develop an action agenda for each of the top six to eight issues

identified in the workshop. Concern for the “core elements” should also be given as appropriate. The participants in the workshop should be asked to volunteer to serve on a Team of their choice. It should be pointed out that this will involve another half-day workshop in several weeks and then a series of meetings over the next two to three months to complete an action plan for their issue.

ISSUE PRIORITIZATION EXERCISE

The class will break into groups of 6 or less. Each group will represent a team of local planning and development professionals whose purpose is to design a practical and effective strategic planning process for either Washington (nonmetropolitan), Norman (metropolitan), or Prairie (regional). In Ag County (rural), the planning team represents a group of local leaders.

The team will determine how to identify and give priority to the key development issues in the community. However, part of this process will include a small group process in which the Nominal Group Technique will be used to arrive at a prioritized list as one example of how to do it. Results will be shared.

Resource information is available in the class materials. Before you begin the small group process take time to look the resource material over. Someone in the group should take notes on the group’s recommendations on the flip chart provided. A presentation of these recommendations will be made to the other group or groups for feedback and comment.

WASHINGTON, NORTH DAKOTA

The community of Washington, North Dakota, is located in Wheat County in the eastern part of the state. It is a city of 15,000 in a rural county of 25,000. A major farm equipment company closed last year after a prolonged strike, leaving a 150,000 square foot one-story building vacant. This closing, together with some recent layoffs in several other manufacturing facilities, has resulted in an unemployment rate that has stabilized around 10%.

The community currently has considerable excess water and sewage treatment capacity. It is not on an interstate highway, but has two major four lane highways intersecting just outside of the city. One of the two rail lines serving Washington is in danger of being abandoned. The city-owned industrial park only has several small sites left, although several large sites have been zoned industrial. No municipal utilities, however, have been extended to these sites.

Washington is home to a two-year community college and a small liberal arts college. The city has a good parks and recreation program, and the county contains a major state park. Downtown Washington is suffering from competition with a new discount center located on the edge of town at the intersection of the two major highways.

The loss of jobs and uncertain prospects for new job opportunities is prompting an out-migration of the more skilled workers. Many of the children that go off to college do not return to Washington to live and work. Local elementary and secondary schools are suffering from low salaries for teachers, which is beginning to be translated into a declining quality of

education. The dropout rate for high school students is now above the state average and is rising annually.

The stock of housing and housing costs in Washington have been relatively stable for the past several years. An increasing number of older houses are being rented out or abandoned. Virtually no new housing units are being built on speculation.

The city has a full-time city manager and a full-time planner, but no community development or economic development specialist. Any marketing done for the community or working with industrial prospects is through the Washington Area Chamber of Commerce. The assistant to the executive director of the Chamber has the responsibility for economic development and marketing. The Chamber membership is unwilling to contribute more dues for an expanded marketing program. Most of these members are local merchants whose profits have been suffering over the past several years.

The city and county are willing to contribute to the marketing effort, but they won't give their money to the chamber of commerce. The other manufacturers in Washington would also contribute to a more aggressive program, but not through increased chamber dues. These firms realize that additional manufacturing operations are needed to share the tax burden and to maintain the pool of skilled labor. But the existing manufacturers are also concerned that not enough attention is being paid to them and to their problems. Several have considered moving further south to get out of the union environment.

The political leaders of the community are not the primary influential leadership of Washington. It is not always clear just where the strongest influential leadership lies. There is an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with the current socioeconomic situation, and the political leaders are concerned that they will bear the primary blame for it. The minority leadership feels left out of both the local political and economic process.

The President of the Chamber of Commerce and the Mayor have agreed on the need for a strategic plan for the community to help it resolve all of its problems. It will be the responsibility of the Executive Director of the Chamber to organize and coordinate the effort.

THE NORMAN METROPOLITAN AREA, NORTH DAKOTA

The Norman metropolitan area is located in eastern North Dakota. It is an urban area of 145,000 population; Norman, the central city, has a population of 85,000. Unemployment has been running one or two points above the national average due to company downsizings, the closing of some older agricultural implement plants, and the failure to attract any significant new employers over the past several years.

The area currently has the physical infrastructure to handle new growth. Excess water and sewage treatment capacity exists. It is served by a north-south and an east-west interstate highway. Industrial parks have available land, but they are basically unattractive and contain a number of poorly maintained industrial facilities or they are undeveloped suburban sites. The only available industrial buildings larger than 40,000 square feet are obsolete structures.

Downtown Norman is relatively attractive, but it has very little retail activity. All of the regular department stores are in one large suburban mall. Large discount centers are clustered around the mall. Most of the downtown office space is occupied by government agencies, financial institutions, and those professional firms serving government.

Norman is home to a large State university and a two-year community college. The area has a good parks and recreation program, and a state park is located on a large reservoir north of town. The local Arts Council has had a difficult time developing sustained support for significant cultural events and activities.

The loss of jobs and the uncertain prospects for new job opportunities is prompting an out-migration of the more skilled workers. Graduates of the colleges and university go elsewhere for work. Local elementary and secondary schools are suffering from low salaries for teachers and overcrowded classrooms. The quality of education is perceived by many to be declining. The dropout rate for high school students is now above the national average and is rising annually. The problem is particularly acute in the Norman school system; the suburban schools are faring somewhat better.

The stock of housing and housing costs in the Norman area has been relatively stable for the past several years. Many of the older homes in Norman are being rented out or are abandoned. Virtually no new housing units are being built on speculation, even in the suburban areas.

The city of Norman has a small economic development staff that reports to the city manager. Their responsibility is primarily business retention and small business development. However, their resources and budget are very limited. The marketing of the metro area is handled by a public-private non-profit economic development agency called the Norman Area Economic Council (NEAC). This organization receives 1/3 of its funding from the county (Lincoln County), 1/3 from the City of Norman, and 1/3 from the private sector. The suburban communities rely on NEAC for their economic development activity, but they fail to fund it. The Metro Chamber of Commerce has an active international trade program, and it keeps fighting with NEAC over who should be marketing internationally.

Stagnant revenues have led to an ongoing debate over whether or not local government should reduce its funding to NEAC. The private sector has a declining leadership base, as local companies are merging with or being acquired by national firms.

The whole question of local leadership is a problem in the Norman area. Many of the executives and professionals have moved to the suburbs or the outlying rural area, leaving the City of Norman with a growing base of lower income residents. Crime and gang activity is rapidly rising in the City. The political leaders of the City can't agree on what needs to be done, and they fight constantly with County government. The minority leadership feels left out of both the political and economic process.

The Chairman of the Lincoln Board of Supervisors and the Mayor of Norman have agreed on the need for a strategic plan for the community to help it resolve its key problems. It will be

the responsibility of the Executive Director of NEAC to organize and coordinate the effort.

AG COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA

The rural county of Ag County, North Dakota, is located in the southwestern part of the state. It is a county of 7,000 people, with a county seat (Farmville) of 3,000. The population declined by 5% between 1980 and 1990, but has been slowly growing again the past four years as a result of retirees moving there. An apparel plant that was located in Farmville closed last year and the company moved the operation to Mexico, leaving a 50,000 square foot one-story building vacant. This closing, together with some recent layoffs in several other small manufacturing facilities and the decline of the local agricultural economy, has resulted in an unemployment rate that has stabilized around 10%. However, some small manufacturing firms and an agribusiness firm that were started locally are showing some promise for future growth.

The only sewage treatment facility in the county able to handle industrial loads is located in Farmville. It currently has excess water and sewage treatment capacity. The county is not on an interstate highway, but has two major four lane highways intersecting just outside of Farmville. One of the two rail lines serving Ag County is in danger of being abandoned, which would shut down a large grain elevator that only marginally profitable. The only industrial sites in the county are just outside Farmville, but they are undeveloped and no municipal utilities have been extended to them. The telephone company is finishing their conversion of the county's phone system to an up-to-date digital switching system.

A two-year community college is located in the adjacent county to the east. The nearest hospital is also located in that county. However, Ag County contains a state park that is located on a large reservoir on the western edge of the county. Downtown Farmville is suffering from competition with a new discount center located on the edge of town at the intersection of the two major highways.

The loss of jobs and uncertain prospects for new job opportunities is prompting an out-migration of the more skilled workers. Many of the children that go off to college do not return to Ag County to live and work. Local elementary and secondary schools are suffering from low salaries for teachers, which is beginning to be translated into a declining quality of education. The drop-out rate for high school students is now above the state average and is rising annually.

The stock of housing and housing costs in the county have been relatively stable for the past several years. An increasing number of older houses are being abandoned. Virtually no new housing units are being built on speculation.

The county has a full-time county manager who also serves as planner, but no community development or economic development specialist. No formal marketing is being done for the county, and any industrial prospects are handled through the Ag County Area Chamber of Commerce in Farmville, which has only a part-time manager. Most of the members of the Chamber are local merchants whose profits have been suffering over the past several years.

The political leaders of the county are not the primary influential leadership. It is not always clear just where the strongest influential leadership lies. There is an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with the current socioeconomic situation, and the political leaders are concerned that they will bear the primary blame for it. The emerging leadership feels left out of both the local political and economic process.

The President of the Ag County Area Chamber of Commerce and the Chairman of the County Board of Supervisors have agreed on the need for a strategic plan for the community to help it resolve all of its problems. It will be the responsibility of the manager of the Chamber to organize and coordinate the effort.

THE PRAIRIE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

This four-county EDD is located in the southwest corner of the state of North Dakota. The county seats of three counties (Lincolnville in Lincoln, Johnsontown in Johnson, and Adamsburg in Adams) are approximately equal in size at around 8,000 residents. The other county seat, Jefferson in Jefferson County, has 12,000 residents, and is the primary trade center for the region. Smaller communities are located throughout the region, serving mostly as declining agricultural service centers. The population declined by 5% between 1980 and 1990, but has been slowly growing again the past five years as a result of retirees moving into the larger communities.

A major farm equipment company closed last year in Jefferson after a prolonged strike, leaving a 100,000 square foot one-story building vacant. Employees at the plant commuted from all over the four-county region to work at the high-paying jobs. Although this closing, together with some recent layoffs in several other manufacturing facilities in the region, should have resulted in a higher unemployment rate, the out-migration of workers and their families has kept the rate relatively low. Agricultural production is moving to large hog farms or specialized crops, displacing the family farms and reducing the need for farm workers. Some small manufacturing firms that were started locally and a teleservice (back office) company are showing some promise for future growth.

Jefferson currently has considerable excess water and sewage treatment capacity. The other three cities have adequate utilities to meet current residential demand, but not enough capacity for increased industrial usage. Interstate Highway 42 runs east-west through the District, passing through the outskirts of Washington, and runs within 2 miles of Lincolnville. Adamsburg and Johnsontown are served by two-lane highways that connect them with Jefferson. One of the two rail lines serving this district is in danger of being abandoned, which would shut down several large grain elevators that are only marginally profitable.

The industrial park in Jefferson is owned by an industrial development authority, but it only has several small sites left. However, several large sites on the edge of town have been zoned industrial. No municipal utilities, however, have been extended to these sites. The three other cities have areas that are designated industrial sites, but they are totally undeveloped. Existing manufacturing is located on free-standing sites scattered around the communities.

Jefferson is home to a two-year community college and a small liberal arts college. Local

elementary and secondary schools are suffering from low salaries for teachers, which is beginning to be perceived as a declining quality of education. The dropout rate for high school students is now above the state average and is rising annually. Many of the children that do graduate and go off to college do not return to the area to live and work.

The loss of jobs and uncertain prospects for new job opportunities is prompting an out-migration of the younger and more skilled workers. As a result, the work force is getting older and less skilled. Also, income levels are dropping, and the average household income is now significantly below the national average.

The downtowns of these communities are declining and have a high vacancy rate. A discount superstore recently located on the edge of Jefferson near the interchange with the Interstate.

A large state park has been recently created along a large reservoir in Johnson and Lincoln counties. Vacation and retirement housing is also being built along the lake. The state, however, is not doing much to promote the lake's recreational potential.

A Native American reservation occupies a portion of Johnson and Adams counties. Unemployment on the reservation is high, and the possibility of constructing a casino is being explored. However, distance from major population centers is a major concern for tribal leaders.

The stock of housing and housing costs in the District have been relatively stable for the past several years. An increasing number of older houses are being rented out or abandoned. Virtually no new housing units are being built on speculation.

The city of Jefferson has a full-time city manager and a full-time planner, but no community development or economic development specialist. In the other counties, a full-time professional serves as both city and county manager and planner. Any marketing done for the District or its communities, or working with industrial prospects, is done through the local Chambers of Commerce. The Jefferson Chamber of Commerce assigned the assistant to the executive director the responsibility for economic development and marketing. The Chamber membership is unwilling to contribute more dues for an expanded marketing program. Most of these members are local merchants whose profits have been suffering over the past several years.

The Prairie EDD has a small staff and very limited budget. Past planning efforts have been primarily compendiums of data, with little coordinated planning occurring between the counties.

The four city and county governments are willing to contribute to the marketing effort, but they won't give their money to the chamber of commerce. The manufacturers in the District would also contribute to a more aggressive program, but not through increased chamber dues. These firms realize that additional manufacturing operations are needed to share the tax burden and to maintain the pool of skilled labor. But the existing manufacturers are also concerned that not enough attention is being paid to them and to their problems. Several have considered moving to the Southeast U.S. to avail themselves of incentives and lower operating costs.

The political leaders of these communities are not the primary influential leadership. It is not always clear just where the strongest influential leadership lies. There is an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with the current socioeconomic situation, and the political leaders are concerned that they will bear the primary blame for it. The young emerging leadership feels left out of both the local political and economic process.

The Presidents of the Chambers of Commerce have agreed on the need for a strategic plan for the District to help it resolve its key problems. On the other hand, the political leaders in the four counties are not very cooperative with each other, and frequently make negative public comments about the other communities. Furthermore, public officials from Adams, Johnson, and Lincoln counties are concerned that the City of Jefferson will be designated the growth center for the EDD, causing additional economic distress for the other three cities. Despite this competitiveness, these same officials recognize that they don't have the resources to conduct a strategic planning process on their own. The Chambers are looking to the EDD to organize and coordinate the effort, and to find a source of funding.

STEP 4: STRATEGIC ACTION PLANNING

Immediately following the leadership workshop, the Steering Committee should decide on who should serve as Chair of each Team and recruit that individual. That Chair, with the help of the Steering Committee, should identify other individuals in the community who would be a valuable addition to that Team and then enlist their involvement.

Within four weeks after the leadership workshop, a half-day workshop should be held for the members of the Strategic Action Teams. Invitations to the Strategic Action Team (SAT) workshop should be phoned or mailed or faxed (with phone follow-up) approximately 1 ½ to 2 weeks before the workshop. Local media should be informed about this workshop and its purpose.

The Strategic Planning Facilitator should meet with the SAT Chairs the day before (or the morning of) the workshop for a three-hour training session. This training is extremely important to the success of the action-planning effort, and every Chair or a designated substitute should attend.

Every SAT must be represented at this training. Each Chair will be provided with a package of materials that will be used by the Team over the course of their meetings. The Facilitator will take the Chairs through these materials and forms to ensure their understanding of what needs to be accomplished. The following problem can be used as an example:

Problem: The community is losing its young families.

Causes: Lack of local jobs paying a reasonable wage
 Lack of available quality housing
 Fewer farm families in the area
 Lack of recreational and cultural facilities and activities
 Decline of educational opportunities

At the end of the workshop, the Teams should make sure they have all of the sheets from the flipchart and any relevant notes. The Chair should then ask the members which day and time during the week would be best for them to meet bi-weekly for the next two months or so. These meetings will serve as the continuation of the action-planning process begun at the workshop. The members of the Team should be encouraged to recruit other interested and knowledgeable individuals from the community to serve on the Team.

The dates and times of these meetings should be given to the Coordinator at the end of the work-shop, along with a list of the members of the Team. At the next meeting, the Chair should continue the process begun in the workshop, filling out the templates as each task is completed.

GUIDELINES FOR THE STRATEGIC ACTION TEAMS

The devising of appropriate and effective strategies is facilitated if the goals/issues are thought of as problems to be solved or opportunities to be pursued. The problem-solving steps are:

1. Clearly identify the problem.
2. Brainstorm and/or research the causes of the problem.
3. Determine the barriers or impediments to addressing these causes.
4. For each barrier or cause, identify specific actions that could be taken to remove or reduce the impact of the barrier or cause.
5. Evaluate these strategic actions to determine which courses to take.

It is difficult to develop effective strategies for accomplishing goals. We tend to think in traditional ways and allow our perceptions and preconceived notions to limit our view of the situation. It is therefore often helpful to restructure goal statements of key issues into problem statements. A problem solving approach to developing strategies typically leads to innovative ideas and more effective ways of improving the situation and meeting the goals.

Problem solving is not an approach we tend to use in developing strategic actions. We,

instead, have a tendency to rely on a limited basket of possibilities, based on our previous experience as individuals. Problem solving forces us to broaden our thinking, particularly when it is done within the context of a team. Research has clearly demonstrated that a team, working cooperatively and with clear purpose, is more productive and innovative than a group of individuals working separately. Unfortunately, most people have to be "retrained" to think as problem solvers working in a collaborative environment.

The **first task** of the SAT will be to clarify the problem or problems in the community that is/are related to the issue or set of issues that the Team is addressing. All too often, teams start searching for solutions before they have a clear, shared understanding of the problem. For example, if the issue is the lack of housing for new residents, how can this issue be stated more clearly as a problem to be solved.

1. What is/are the problem(s) surrounding or involved in the issue? Make an initial list on a flip chart through brain-storming.
2. Clarify each problem so that it is clear to all members of the Team. Ask these questions:
 - ☐ General statement of the problem:
 - ☐ Who is involved in the problem?
 - ☐ What change do we want to see occur?
 - ☐ If that change occurs, what would different in the community?
3. After the members of the Team are comfortable with the clarification of the problem statements, work with them to fill out the problem-solving templates. One form should be filled out for each problem.

Problem-Solving: Template #1

Key Development Issue _____

Problem #_____

☐ General statement of the problem:

☐ Who is involved with the problem?

☐ What change do we want to see occur?

☐ If that change occurs, what would be different in the community?

The **second task** of the Team is to determine the causes of the problem. A *root cause* is a controllable, solvable force that explains why the problem exists. It's pivotal reason that started the problem in the first place and must be dealt with in order to find a long-term workable solution. *Effects* are often confused with causes; they are merely the by-products or symptoms of the causes. Treating the effects of the problem will not solved it. For example, if the community is not getting inquiries from manufacturing prospects, the cause of the problem may not simply be the lack of marketing. It could be that the community has no suitable industrial sites or an available building. That is eliminating them from most site searches. Frequently, it is necessary to conduct additional research to further define the nature of the problem and its causes.

After the problems have been identified and clarified, and the problem-solving templates have been completed, the Team should then determine the causes of each problem and fill out the appropriate template.

Next, the Team will prioritize the problems. Each member of the team will assign a "high", "medium", or "low" priority to each identified problem. The Team Chair will record these rankings. Those problems that the majority of the Team considers to be high priority will be given further attention in the action-planning process. The others will be noted but not included in the final strategic plan. The purpose of the strategic planning process is to focus resources on the most important problems rather than attempting to address all problems (comprehensive planning).

Root Causes: Template #2

Key Development Issue _____

For each problem statement, determine its root causes:

Problem # _____

☐ Problem statement:

☐ What is causing the problem?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

☐ Why haven't they been solved or removed?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

☐ Ranking of Causes

Causes	High	Medium	Low
A.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The **third task** of the Team will be to determine what actions could be taken to remove the causes of the problem. Only those causes that can be addressed locally and are within local control should be considered in the action-planning process.

Each cause for each problem should be separately considered. The Team should then brainstorm to create a list of possible actions that would remove that cause. “Out of the box” thinking and innovative ideas should be encouraged. No ideas should be eliminated or should be dismissed. This should all be recorded on a flip chart initially and then transferred onto the Action-Planning Template.

PROBLEM-SOLVING EXERCISE FOR TRAINING FACILITATORS

Using the highest priority development issue facing your simulated community, work as a group to convert it into a clear problem statement. Keep it to one or two sentences.

In your small group, using the format discussed on problem-solving (Steps 1 to 5), determine several key causes of the problem, based on your professional experience and general knowledge of community development. Using that same base of understanding, attempt to discover why those causes continue to exist (barriers), and begin brainstorming some actions that could be taken to resolve those causes.

Share your results with the whole group, as time permits.

Action-Planning: Template #3

Key Development Issue _____

Problem # _____

☐ Problem statement:

☐ Cause:

Action 1: _____

Action 2: _____

Action 3: _____

Action 4: _____

Action 5: _____

When the Team has exhausted ideas about what could be done about the causes of the problem, introduce some of the ideas provided by the Strategic Planning Facilitator. These ideas have been gleaned from other plans, studies, research, and the experience of other communities. The Team should discuss and adopt/adapt any of these additional actions as appropriate and include them on the list.

Once this process is completed for all of the priority problems and their causes, go back over the actions as a group and remove those that are totally impractical or inappropriate based on the Team's judgement.

It may be necessary or helpful to have the Facilitator meet with each of the SATs early in their work to ensure their understanding of the process.

After the Team has completed a list of actions for each priority problem that they have agreed upon, each action should be discussed in greater depth to determine the following:

- ☐ Which organization(s) or agency(ies) should be responsible for carrying out the action?
- ☐ How much will it cost to do?
- ☐ What would be the source(s) of funding?
- ☐ What would be the timing of it?
- ☐ What benefits will the community receive from the successful implementation of this action?

Upon completion of the analysis of each of the strategic actions, the Team should prioritize these actions to determine which would be most cost-effective and critical for addressing the problem.

The "high" priority actions will be incorporated into the strategic plan; the rest will be noted.

All of the completed templates will be turned in to the Coordinator and Steering Committee for review and comment.

Strategic Action: Template #4

Key Development Issue _____

Problem #_____

☐ Problem statement:

☐ Cause:

Strategic Action#_____

☐ Action statement:

☐ Responsible organization(s):

☐ Cost: \$_____

☐ Source(s) of funding:

☐ Timetable:

☐ Benefits to the community:

☐ Priority ranking: High_____; Medium_____; Low_____.

STEP 5: STRATEGIC PLAN DRAFT

The Strategic Planning Facilitator will work with the Steering Committee to convert each of the problems, or sets of problems, into goal statements. These goals will be incorporated into the strategic plan, along with the priority strategic actions that address each goal.

It should be noted that the goal is the bridge between the vision statement and the strategic actions. It is not measurable or action-oriented; instead, it is a statement describing a desired future condition. For example, a goal could be as follows: “the local educational system, from kindergarten through secondary school, is rated as one of the best in the State and the Midwest.”

Additional information about writing goals is contained in the strategic planning document.

Goal Writing Exercise for Training Facilitators

Within each of your groups, individually write a goal statement for the highest priority issue from the previous exercise. In turn, share your goal with other members of the group and critique each other's statement.

The strategic plan draft should contain the following:

- ☐ An explanation of the local strategic planning process
- ☐ A summary of the community assessment
- ☐ The vision statement
- ☐ The goals and strategic actions
- ☐ The implementation procedure for the plan

The format for the goals and actions should be as follows:

Goal 1: _____

Strategic action 1: _____

Responsible organization: _____

Cost: \$ _____

Source of funding: _____

Timetable: _____

Benefit to the community: _____

Strategic action 2: _____

Responsible organization: _____

Cost: \$ _____

Source of funding: _____

Timetable: _____

Benefit to the community: _____

The Coordinator will collect the above information from the Steering Committee and will

complete the first draft of the strategic plan. This will be submitted to the Steering Committee for review and comment. The revised draft of the strategic plan will be resubmitted to the Steering Committee and distributed to the SATs for review and comment.

The Facilitator and Steering Committee will then meet collectively with all of the SATs to discuss the strategic plan. Discussion will also be held in this meeting on how to present the plan to the general public for their review and comment before the plan is “finalized.” (No strategic plan should ever be final)

An executive summary of the plan’s highlights should be prepared by the Steering Committee that can be distributed to the interested public and/or published by local media.

Several public meetings should be held after distribution of the plan to provide open discussion of the plan.

STEP 6: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

An implementation process should be developed by the Steering Committee to ensure that the plan is carried out. This could include:

- ☐ Members of the Steering Committee meeting with representatives of the organizations designated as responsible for specific strategic actions. The purpose of this discussion is to obtain buy-in from the organization or agency regarding their role in the action and to assist in determining how the action can be implemented effectively. This should lead to a Memorandum of Agreement from each responsible entity.
- ☐ Task forces should be established based on the SATs as an ongoing entity to monitor and coordinate the implementation of their sector of the plan. These Task Forces should provide quarterly or bi-annual reports to the Steering Committee on the progress achieved.
- ☐ The Steering Committee should prepare an annual report on the status and progress of the strategic plan to be presented to the public and local officials through the media and possible public meetings.